

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7867

S E C R E T NASSAU 0287

NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: APER (SHELTON, TURNER B., FSO-2)

SUBJ: TURNER SHELTON

REF: NASSAU 0259

FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM AMBASSADOR WEISS - EYES ONLY

1. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, I MET THIS MORNING WITH MINEXTAFF ADDERLEY AT HIS REQUEST. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS REPRODUCE THE DISCUSSION AS CLOSE TO VERBATIM AS POSSIBLE AND WITHOUT COMMENT.

2. THE MINISTER STARTED OUT BY SAYING THAT HE WANTED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE LONG-STANDING PROBLEM OF MR. SHELTON'S AGREEMENT. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, AS HAD PROBABLY BEEN DISCERNED BY NOW, THE GOVERNMENT NEITHER WISHED TO SAY "YES" NOR "NO" TO THE AGREEMENT. TO SAY "YES" WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE AND NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE BAHAMAS. TO SAY "NO" WOULD SIMILARLY BE VERY AWKWARD FOR THE BAHAMAS. THE BAHAMAS' REPUTATION HAD ALREADY SUFFERED

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UNJUSTIFIABLY AS A RESULT OF THE LOBSTER NEGOTIATION FAILURE

AND AS A RESULT OF ALLEGATIONS BEING MADE STEMMING FROM THE IRS INVESTIGATION. AS A RESULT, THE BAHAMAS WAS MOST RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GROUNDS FOR CRITICISM OF ITS ACTIONS ESPECIALLY BY MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, MR. SHELTON'S APPOINTMENT PRESENTED CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS. IF SOME OF THE CHARGES WHICH WERE BEING MADE AGAINST HIM IN THE U.S. PRESS WERE ONLY RELATED TO ISSUES WHICH TOOK PLACE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, THAT WOULD BE BAD ENOUGH. HOWEVER, SO FAR AS THE GCOB IS CONCERNED, HIS PERFORMANCE WHEN HE WAS CONSUL GENERAL IN THE BAHAMAS IS ALSO OPEN TO QUESTION WITH EVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INVESTIGATION IN THE U.S. OF THAT PERFORMANCE.

4. MR. SHELTON'S PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE IN NASSAU PROVIDED REAL DIFFICULTIES. THE FACT THAT HE HAD A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE OLD "BAY STREET BOYS" WAS WELL KNOWN BUT PERHAPS COULD BE JUSTIFIED TO SOME DEGREE BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT THEY REPRESENTED THE RULING FACTION AT THAT TIME. (THE "BAY STREET BOYS" WERE THE WEALTHY RULING CLASS IN THE BAHAMAS MADE UP IN LARGE PART OF WHITE MERCHANTS WHOSE STORES WERE LOCATED ON BAY STREET.) HE UNDERSTOOD THAT I OR ANYONE ELSE AS THE U.S. AMBASSADOR HAD TO MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH DIVERSE GROUPS. BUT MR. SHELTON WAS MOST INDISCREET IN TERMS OF HIS CONTACTS. THAT IS, NOT ONLY WITH REGARD TO WHOM HE CHOSE TO DEVELOP CLOSE ASSOCIATIONS WITH BUT ALSO HOW HE HANDLED THOSE ASSOCIATIONS.

5. THE ENTIRE PROBLEM WAS EVEN MADE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT MR. SHELTON IS BRINGING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON INDIVIDUALS HAVING A LARGE ECONOMIC INTEREST IN THE BAHAMAS TO INTERCEDE ON HIS BEHALF. THE MINISTER SAID THAT BY AND LARGE HE FELT IT INAPPROPRIATE TO REVEAL THE NAMES, BUT HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THEY WERE INDIVIDUALS WHO DID HAVE CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC POWER IN THE BAHAMAS. ONE NAME WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD MENTION (ALTHOUGH ASKING THAT I USE UTMOST DISCRETION IN HANDLING THIS NAME) WAS JUAN TRIPPE WHO CALLED THE PRIME MINISTER PERSONALLY FROM NEW YORK. THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT LIKE THIS SORT OF PRESSURE BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR, BUT AT THE SAME TIME COULD HARDLY AFFORD TO TOTALLY
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IGNORE IT.

6. THE MINISTER THEN ASKED IF I HAD ANY INFORMAL REACTION. I SAID THAT IT WAS OF COURSE MOST AWKWARD FOR ME TO REACT. IF THE PRESIDENT CHOSE MR. SHELTON TO REPRESENT HIM IT HAD TO BE ASSUMED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD CONFIDENCE IN MR. SHELTON'S ABILITY TO REPRESENT THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS AND THOSE OF THE U.S. THE MINISTER QUICKLY INJECTED TO SAY THAT THIS OF COURSE

WAS THE POSITION WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO TAKE AS WELL, WHICH MADE IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT IN THAT BASED ON MR. SHELTON'S PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE IN THE BAHAMAS THEY DID NOT FEEL THAT IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY TO HAVE HIM HERE AS THE U.S. AMBASSADOR. THE MINISTER THEN ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO NEITHER SAY "YES" NOR "NO." I SAID THAT I ASSUMED THAT AT SOME POINT I WOULD BE DIRECTED TO COME IN AND REQUEST A DEFINITIVE RESPONSE. THE MINISTER SAID BUT SUPPOSE EVEN AT THAT TIME WE STILL SAY WE HAVEN'T MADE UP OUR MIND? I RESPONDED THAT FRANKLY I DID NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN SUCH A CIRCUMSTANCE SINCE, SO FAR AS I KNEW, IT WAS UNPRECEDENTED. I SAID THAT IF HE WERE SEEKING MY OWN PERSONAL ADVICE, UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE GOVERNMENT AGREE TO ACCEPT MR. SHELTON. THE MINISTER SAID YES, PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO DO THAT, BUT THEY WOULD MUCH PREFER TO HAVE THE ISSUE FADE AWAY SO THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE TO ACCEPT THE ONUS OF SAYING "NO" NOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF SAYING "YES."

7. THE DISCUSSION ENDED ON THIS NOTE.
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